

State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # P-36-006556 **UPDATE**
HRI# _____
Trinomial CA-SBR-6556H

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*Resource Name or #:

*Recorded by: M.K. Meiser, M.A.

*Date: 05/27/09 (revised 11/23/09)

☐ Continuation ☒ Update

***P3a. Description:**

Previously recorded as a homestead/farm complex, P-36-006556 includes a one-story residence (circa 1950s), a two-story unfinished garage, two outbuildings, animal pens, a large reservoir, and the remains of an irrigation system. Located at 16198 Lockhart Road, this was the site of the first homestead in the western Harper Lake area. When first recorded in 1990, the site was known as the Hays farm and had been continuously occupied to that point. The configuration of buildings and operation remained intact. The site was evaluated as significant for being the location of the first homestead in the area, but that structural and archaeological potential had been exhausted by the survey (Hampson and Swanson 1990).

The property appears to be declining in condition since it was first recorded in 1990. The site was relocated and the structures were unoccupied and in a deteriorating condition. The residence, a circa 1950s one-story, square-plan house with a low-pitch, pyramidal roof, clapboard siding, wood-framed horizontal sliding windows, and a substantial rock chimney, appears unaltered. It is a modest example of vernacular architecture with characteristics of the Minimal Traditional and Ranch styles. The modern two-story garage and residential unit is constructed of plywood and has aluminum-framed windows and doors, and appears unfinished and now deteriorating. Two gabled outbuildings on site appear to be the oldest structures, with board and batten siding and areas replaced with plywood. One outbuilding has a partial stone siding that is incomplete. These outbuildings, along with a large frame animal pen, are in poor condition.

P5a. Photo



P5b. Description of Photo:

Residence (circa 1950s), view facing northwest, 08080191 DSCN9495, MKM 05-27-2009

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P5a. Photo



P5b. Description of Photo:

Outbuildings (date of construction unknown), view facing northwest, 08080191 DSCN9489, MKM 05-27-2009

***B10. Significance:**

San Bernardino County surveyors measured the section lines of the rectangular grid system for the Harper Lake area in 1856. At that time there were no land improvements in the area. In 1872, C.S. Black established a cattle ranch just east of Harper Lake. Black built an adobe house, and the Black Ranch was the only settlement within the Harper Lake Valley for decades. The west side of Harper Lake was not settled until the early part of the 20th century. The first homesteaders on the west side were Henry and Emma Spenker, who arrived in 1911 and filed for a homestead patent on the southwest quarter of Section 28 (Township 11 North, Range 4 West). The Spenkers hoped to create a small farming community based on irrigation. Spenker maintained an alfalfa ranch by creating irrigation ditches and building an irrigation reservoir. The Spenkers also planted orchards and raised chickens and turkeys (Swanson 1988). The Spenkers were also perhaps the only homesteaders who completely subsisted on their farm, while other settlers supplemented their incomes with other jobs or treated their homesteads as secondary residences (Hampson and Swanson 1990). Spenker built the first reservoir in the area, and cleared and irrigated 40 acres to raise alfalfa. He also reported to have planted orchards and gardens, and to have raised chickens and turkeys.

The site retains sufficient significance for eligibility for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A and the CRHR under Criterion 1 as the pioneering homestead in a previously undeveloped section of the Mojave Desert. The first of several to develop in the area south of Harper Lake, the Spenkers' homestead is significant within the theme of early 20th century Mojave Desert agricultural development. Its period of significance dates from the earliest era of recorded homestead activity in area in 1911, through the decades when homesteading agricultural activities dominated the area, until the transition to a ranching community by the 1950s. The farm is significant as the site of the first Harper Lake community homestead built by the pioneering Spenker family, an event that marked the inception of an entire community's development.

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Although locally significant as the first homesteading family southwest of Harper Lake, the Spenker family did not leave a sufficiently significant legacy as important historical persons. The site is not eligible for listing under NRHP Criterion B or CRHR Criterion 2.

The buildings are modest and are not architecturally significant. The reservoir, remnants of the irrigation system, and the leveled field are the only discernible features of the site that may date to the Spenker homestead. The original residence was replaced circa 1950s with the current residence. Two outbuildings appear old enough to date to the Spenker period, but have been altered and do not indicate a reliable date of construction. The complex and its features are not eligible for listing under NRHP Criterion C or CRHR Criterion 3.

The previous study (Hampson and Swanson 1990) did not observe any significant historic archaeological materials. The current study found that there was little evidence of potential subsurface historic archaeological deposits (Jordan 2009). The presence of the original reservoir and irrigation system, as well as other ground features has the potential to yield further information about the nascent history of the Harper Lake community. However, with little physical or archival evidence of subsurface deposits, the site does not demonstrate sufficient potential to be eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D or for the CRHR under Criterion 4.

Although the complex is tied to the development of the agricultural community of Harper Lake from its inception to its heyday in the 1950s, many of its features do not retain sufficient integrity to be eligible for the NRHP or CRHR. The original Spenker residence was demolished. The buildings are in a deteriorating state since being abandoned in the late 2000s. Alterations to the remaining outbuildings and their currently decrepit condition make it difficult to identify their historical context. While historically significant, the remaining features of the Spenker homestead do not sufficiently convey the significance of the pioneering period. Therefore, due to a lack of sufficient integrity, resource P-36-006556 is not eligible for the NRHP or CRHR.

P5a. Photo



P5b. Description of Photo:

The farmstead complex with outbuildings at left, residence (circa 1950s) at right, view facing south, MKM 05-27-2009

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P5a. Photo



P5b. Description of Photo:

Reservoir, view facing south, 08080191 DSCN9497, MKM 05-27-2009

***B12. References:**

California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP)

1995 *Instructions for Recording Historical Resources*. Sacramento: Department of Parks and Recreation, State of California.

Meiser, M.K. and Theodore Cooley

2009 *Cultural Resources Report for the Mojave Solar Project, San Bernardino County, California*. Prepared by EDAW, Inc. for Mojave Solar LLC.

Hampson, R. Paul, and Mark T. Swanson

1990 *Cultural Resources Survey: Luz Solar Energy Generating System (SEGS) XI and XII, Harper Lake, San Bernardino County*. Greenwood and Associates. Submitted to Luz Construction, Inc. Unpublished report on file at San Bernardino County Museum, 2024 Orange Tree Lane, Redlands, California 92374.

Jordan, Stacey

2009 *Historic Archaeological Survey Letter Report for the Mojave Solar Project, San Bernardino County*. Prepared by AECOM Design + Planning for the California Energy Commission.

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B13. Remarks:

Mojave Solar, LLC proposes to develop the Mojave Solar Project that would be located near Harper Dry Lake in unincorporated San Bernardino County, California. EDAW AECOM was retained by Mojave Solar, LLC to conduct cultural resources studies, including archaeological and historic architectural surveys in support of preparation of an Application for Certification, which is required by the California Energy Commission (CEC) for power generating plants that produce an excess of 50 MW of energy. The CEC implements California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) procedures during the decision-making stage of development. This study was conducted in accordance with CEQA guidelines to evaluate cultural resources within the project area that are 45 years of age or older for eligibility to the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), to assess impacts on historical resources resulting from the proposed project, and to determine potential mitigation measures for significant impacts to historical resources. Field work was conducted by EDAW AECOM between May 27 and June 22, 2009. The current study is documented in *Mojave Solar Project Cultural Resources Technical Report, San Bernardino County, California* (EDAW AECOM 2009).

***B14. Evaluator:** M.K. Meiser, M.A.

***Date of Evaluation:** 05/27/2009 (revised 11/23/09)